

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

ACDA-07 ARA-06 DHA-02 EB-07 OES-07 /114 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0078

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 05677

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AO, CG, CF, XA, BE

SUBJECT: CONGOLESE FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO BRUSSELS:

MEDIATION OF ANGOLA-ZAIRE DIFFICULTIES

REF: BRUSSELS 5437

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY'S AFRICAN DESK OFFICER (VERKAMMEN),
BRIEFING EMBOFF ON BRUSSELS VISIT OF CONGO/BRAZZAVILLE
FOREIGN MINISTER OBENGA, SAID OBENGA TOLD BELGIAN OFFICIALS
JUNE1THAT NEW GOVERNMENT OF CONGO WAS WILLING TO PLAY A
MEDIATOR ROLE BETWEEN ANGOLA AND ZAIRE WITHIN THE FRAME-
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WORK OF THE ANGOLAN-ZAIRIAN JOINT COMMISSION.

OBENGA SAID HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY BEEN APPROACHED

ABOUT A POSSIBLE MEDIATION ROLE AND THOUGHT THIS WAS A

"GOOD IDEA" SINCE IT IS OFTEN EASIER FOR A SMALL COUNTRY

TO PERSUADE TWO BIG COUNTRIES TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS.

HE STRESSED TO BELGIANS THAT SUCCESSFUL CONGO MEDIATION

EFFORT WOULD REQUIRE ADDRESSING OF ALL OUTSTANDING

PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES - SUCH AS CABINDA, EXILE AND OPPOSITION GROUPS, AND THE BENGUELA RAILROAD - AND NOT JUST SHABA INVASION.

2. VERKAMMEN SAID OBENGA SPENT AN INORDINATE AMOUNT OF TIME TALKING ABOUT CABINDA AND THOUGHT HIS VIEWS WERE A BIT OUT OF THE ORDINARY. OBENGA VIEWED CABINDA AS PROBLEM OF RELATIONSHIP OF AN OUTLYING AREA TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. THE QUESTION, ACCORDING TO OBENGA, WAS THE SIMPLE ONE OF HOW MUCH AUTONOMY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO CABINDA BY LUANDA AND THIS KIND OF PROBLEM SHOULD BE SOLVED BY A REFERENDUM. THE ISSUE WAS COMPLICATED BY CABINDA'S RICHNESS IN PETROLEUM AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES. OBENGA EMPHASIZED THAT AS A "NEIGHBOR" CONGO WAS ESPECIALLY QUALIFIED TO MEDIATE CABINDA DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN MOBUTU AND AGOSTINHO NETO.

3. VERKAMMEN SAID OBENGA TOOK NOTE OF COUP ATTEMPT IN ANGOLA AND EXPRESSED VIEW THAT CUBANS - BOTH MILITARY AND TECHNICIANS - ARE NECESSARY FOR THE SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ANGOLA. HE SAW A DANGER THAT ANGOLAN POPULATION WOULD "REJECT" THIS CUBAN ROLE AND SEEK TO EXPEL THEM. (MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL DE BASSOMPIERRE SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD CHARGE THAT OBENGA WAS PESSIMISTIC OVERALL REGARDING AN EARLY IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN ZAIRE AND ANGOLA. HE SAID OBENGA THINKS IT WILL TAKE TIME TO HEAL THE WOUNDS OF RECENT EVENTS.)

4. OBENGA REVIEWED GENERAL AFRICAN QUESTIONS WITH
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BELGIANS, STRESSING THAT RHODESIAN AND NAMIBIAN WERE ESSENTIALLY PROBLEMS OF DECOLONIZATION, WHILE SOUTH AFRICA'S APARTHEID POLICY WAS AN INTERNAL PROBLEM THAT COULD BE SOLVED BY "COMMON SENSE," WITH THE EVENTUAL FORMATION OF A SOCIETY WHERE BOTH BLACKS AND WHITES SHARE POLITICAL POWER AND NATURAL RESOURCES. OBENGA TOLD BELGIANS HE SAW "RISK OF WAR" IN HORN OF AFRICA.

5. VERKAMMEN SAID OBENGA SOUGHT MORE ACTIVE RELATIONS WITH BELGIUM, AND WORKING GROUPS DISCUSSED COMMERCIAL RELATIONS, TOURISM, PETROLEUM MATTERS AND STUDENT EXCHANGES. VERKAMMEN OBSERVED THAT THE NEW CONGOLESE GOVERNMENT SEEMED TO BE SEEKING IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH WEST AND NOTED OBENGA'S OPTIMISM ABOUT NORMALIZING RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES (SEPTTEL). RENNER

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